Engaging stakeholders for an inclusive, innovative and impacting agricultural research in the Mediterranean

Stakeholders: who are they?
- Persons or organisations that may have a significant interest in the project and may affect it or be affected by it, directly or indirectly.

What is innovation?
- Introduction in the research process of a new method, protocol, technique, product, service...
- Translating ideas/inventions into goods or services that create value or for which customers will pay.
- Process possibly leading to market-ready technologies/products, or to changes in social norms/organisation...

What is the true meaning of engagement?
- Active/influential participation in projects.
- Context-, stakeholder-, objective-specific.
- Depends on the type/level of interest, awareness, willingness to commit, skills, availability, resources, influence...

Why engaging stakeholders in research and innovation?
- To incorporate diverse expertise/experience and build a knowledge-innovation community.
- To collect quantitative/qualitative data and make sense out of them.
- To boost knowledge co-generation, creativity, emulation and innovation.
- To redirect funding to high-priority research areas identified jointly with the stakeholders.
- To validate the relevance/credibility of the findings for practice and policy-making.
- To valorise co-generated findings/innovations by promoting their dissemination and use.

Engaging stakeholders allows to align research/innovation processes and outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of the society, and helps to effectively address current and future environmental and societal challenges.

How to effectively engage stakeholders in research?
- Planning their engagement during and after the project.
- Applying suitable participatory techniques/tools.
- Identifying Mediterranean challenges and research priorities, and preparing the project with them.
- Convincing them of the project’s positive impact on their activity/economy.
- Defining collaboratively their role, seeking their feedback and valorising their activities/findings.
- Funding formally their participation in the project.
- Embracing the diversity of disciplines, cultures and perceptions to build long-term, trustful, inspiring and productive collaborations.

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